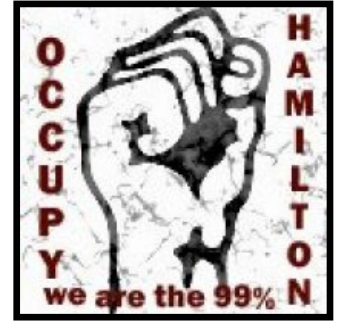


# Occupy Hamilton

Minutes from the Tuesday, October 11<sup>th</sup> General Assembly/Meeting

Start Time: 7:00PM



This first meeting had some really good vibes, brought in by the great turnout of folks who are concerned about the state of the world.

The official start to the meeting commenced with a round of introductions from everyone in attendance. I'm not sure I can remember the names of everyone in attendance, but if this thing builds up steam, then I presume that names and faces will become more familiar.

After an initial round of introductions, the group set about putting together an agenda for the meeting. Before the group set to work on the agenda, there were some roles appointed...

Minutes-taker: Aaron

Facilitator: Kevin

After some work, the agenda looked something like this...

## **AGENDA**

Introductions (second round, as more folks had arrived since the first round)

Decision making procedures for the Occupy Hamilton group

Report from the Occupy Toronto General Assembly (which took place the previous Friday, October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2011)

What the Occupy Hamilton group will do for October 15<sup>th</sup>...

Police Communication

Community Outreach (unions, aboriginal community)

Formation of committees

## **Report: Toronto General Assembly**

A couple of the members in the group identified that they were in attendance at the first General Assembly for the Occupy Toronto group. They offered to give a report to the group about what they saw, so that the Hamilton group could maybe learn from the lessons...

One of the members present identified that the group seemed disorganized, and maybe that they could have done some more research before the Toronto meeting.

The two members also reported that before the Toronto meeting, one of the organizers went ahead without the group's permission and made contact with the police about people getting together in Toronto. It was also stated that this organizer who outreached to the police had a prior political agenda, and may have been striving to fulfil this agenda with the Occupy Toronto movement.

At this point, the group got into a discussion about majority voting strategies, citing that at the Occupy Wall Street movement, they ensure that they have an 80% consensus before making a final decision. Those at the Hamilton group who were giving the report on Toronto stated that Toronto adopted the Wall Street method for decision making. This method also consists of sub-committees, who send delegates to the General Assembly when consensus decision-making is taking place. These delegates bring concerns to the G.A. on behalf of the sub-committee, and participate in the decision making process.

At the Occupy Toronto meeting, the group couldn't come up with an initial meeting location, so they decided to have another meeting on Thursday, October 13<sup>th</sup>.

Toronto also decided to maintain a mainstream media blackout, until they have their ideas together in a more cohesive manner.

It seems like Toronto will designate four people who will be responsible for statements to the media (the "media" committee?)

And it was also noted that the Toronto G.A. was posted on YouTube.

Amanda: Noted that Vancouver and Toronto have different perspectives on this movement, especially in regards to police (with Toronto still somewhat fresh from their experience with the G20 summit last summer).

- Amanda also brought up contacting the police to let them know if we plan on marching.

Lisa: Identified that she felt safer with a police presence at the "Take Back the Night" event.

### **Decision Making Procedures**

John: A consensus decision making model would be preferred, especially with a smaller group

- John went on to discuss his experience with consensus decision making at the Red Hill Expressway occupation
- One of the key roles that John cited in the consensus decision making process was the FACILITATOR
  - o From what I understand, whoever wants to bring forward a proposal brings it forward to the facilitator
  - o The facilitator then facilitates a discussion, at which point everyone gets a chance to speak once in a go-around, then whoever wants to speak again is given a second go...
  - o If no one in the group is feeling the proposal, the facilitator asks if it should be "dropped" for the time being, giving those in favour of the proposal a chance to go work on it and bring it back...or the group could agree on the proposal.
  - o For any objectors, they should be given the chance to work out the proposal a little further, until everyone feels good about it...

\*\*From my (Aaron's) understanding, there are four ways to approach a proposal: members can AGREE, DISAGREE (they feel like it doesn't matter either way), STAND ASIDE (they don't agree, but they won't block it), or BLOCK (they feel so strongly

that they won't let it go forward until it's worked out more)...I've never had a chance to see a fully organized consensus-based process in action, so I think it'll be a learning process for most involved...\*\*

- John also made the point that this process encourages everyone involved to ensure that any proposal that they bring forward has been sussed out, and is very well thought out before bringing it to the group

Alex D: Brought forward an idea that maybe we should have a "plan B" majority vote as a backup in case the group can't come to a consensus, or someone blocks a proposal. Especially in this instance with the Occupy Hamilton group, where there isn't a specific objective, such as in the Red Hill Creek situation.

Joey: Agreed with the idea of a majority vote "plan B" approach.

Jeff: Stated that part of the decision-making process should be the Occupy Hamilton group taking Occupy Wall Street's lead on some of the issues that we may face.

John: Asked how we would know whether we are in line with what's happening at Occupy Wall Street...

Jeff: If we're in a bind, we can see if there is a specific example from Occupy Wall Street that we could look to for guidance.

The discussion kind of seemed to be getting off topic at this point, so a couple people in attendance voiced their concern, and their recommendation that we get back to focusing on decision-making procedures.

Kevin: Put out the idea that if there is a "block," someone puts forward a motion for a majority vote scenario.

Alex D: The trigger point is there and people can put forward a motion for a majority vote that would have to be seconded.

John: Expressed concern that having the majority vote as a "plan b" would establish constant blocks, resulting in a series of majority votes, which might defeat the purpose of the consensus model.

**\*\*Somewhere in here was a vote to have the model be a consensus model with the "majority vote" as a plan B...the group voted in favour of this model, although that already strayed from the consensus method. As well, at this point the group seemed to decide that we should stick with the concept (the consensus model with the majority vote as a last ditch option in the case of a stale mate), instead of getting nit picky with ratios and other very specific details...\*\***

### **What to do for October 15<sup>th</sup>...**

**\*\*Somewhere in here, the facilitator switches from Kevin to Campbell...\*\***

Amanda: Would love to be on the streets of Hamilton showing support for Occupy Wall Street.

Alex D: The main part of this movement is that it is giving people a place to go to voice their opinions, and hash things out and discuss what's wrong with our world, and that's the best thing we can do as Occupy Hamilton.

- Bring people out to have collective conversations on why the world is the way it is

Kevin: Excited about the clear message of the movement, but it also provide a big tent for people coming together to get together for discussions.

Sarah: In favour of going to Toronto on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

Joey: States that Hamilton should feel things out, before deciding what they will do.

- States that he would like to see the group support Toronto at first, then focus on Hamilton after that

Amanda: The group should focus on Hamilton, then think about going to Toronto later...

Carlos: We should focus on Hamilton for now.

Alicia: There are some folks still dealing with the aftermath of what happened at the G20 summit in Toronto last summer...and some who have families, for whom it would be better to stay in Hamilton on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

Kim: We should be in Hamilton in the long run, but would like to see a good number of people from Hamilton go out to support the Occupy Toronto.

Kevin: Has some money from a group that he's part of to make sure that people can afford to go to Toronto...also expresses interest in learning from what happens in Toronto and bringing it back to Hamilton.

Alex: No one's expecting Hamilton to have a huge turnout, but it would be an impact to have Hamilton on the list of cities having occupations.

Alicia: Loves the "pale in comparison to Toronto" vibe that Hamilton rallies have.

Lisa: Agrees with Alicia, but just wants to go to downtown Hamilton.

Jeff: Says that the marketing for the event is already done, and that we can utilize it to get a good representation in Hamilton.

Kim: Some people wanna go; some people will want to stay, so it's all good...

Christina: Are we going to occupy, or are we going to protest? Learning from occupy vs. protest.

Campbell: We might not be able to have a G.A. and an occupy in Toronto...

Kim: People do their thing for this weekend, then we work on occupations in the future.

Joey: The Occupy Hamilton Facebook group is "liked" by other groups, not just other people...

Amanda: The advertising is done, only Antarctica isn't occupying...even a small contingent in Hamilton will be effective.

John: Before we get into large scale occupations, we should give some thought to the response of law enforcement in Hamilton. Hamilton police aren't used to dealing with leaderless organizations...we should have contingency plans for people going to jail, and such...

Holly: Works a lot, hasn't heard about any advertising for the 15<sup>th</sup>...

Alicia: Has been hearing about the Hamilton occupation happening in Gore park...

Emsy (probably not the right name :S): Figure out what we want to do in Hamilton in the long run, then go and support Toronto.

Alex (D): Proposes talking about going to gore park, what time we would go and, and what we would say on the 15<sup>th</sup>...

Kim: At the action on the 15<sup>th</sup>, we should have leaflets advertising an action in Hamilton on the following Saturday.

**\*\*At this point, a follow-up meeting was scheduled for this THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15<sup>TH</sup> @ 7PM...THE SKY DRAGON CENTRE...\*\***

Kevin: Threw out the idea of keeping the meeting indoors for this Thursday, then plan to have bigger "General Assembly" type meetings outdoors for the following Saturdays.

Joey: Wonders if we should start planning an occupation.

Amanda: Wait to see what kind of numbers come out on the weekend, then go from there...

Holly: Thinks those who come to the Hamilton action on Saturday should bring tents anyways.

Kevin: It would be better to have the action in Gore park instead of City Hall...

Alicia: Has experience with street medicing and a medicine background...

Connor: Prefers Gore Park to City Hall for the first action...

Marlon: City Hall is a nightmare for acoustics and setting up a sound system.

John: The press and the police will ask for interviews/who's in charge?

Lisa: Understands EMS procedure, but doesn't think it will be necessary to contact the authorities ahead of time unless the numbers get bigger.

Joey: Likes the idea of a “media committee” for dealing with interviews and statements...

Amanda: Follow the Occupy Wall Street and have no less than four people talking for interviews, remaining leaderless.

Connor: We should put off the police topic for now...

Alex: Put off the assembling of committees for now, and get into unions and other community outreach.

Jeff: Do we need to put together committees for a ½ day of protest in Hamilton? We should focus on creating space for people to get together and leave people to do their own thing for the most part.

Sarah: Will coordinate community outreach...

Marlon: Came to the meeting representing the Hamilton District Labour Council.

Kevin: Is a representative of OPSEU...

Amanda: We should reach out to surrounding aboriginal communities and involve them in the decision to take actions on their land.

Campbell: We should be mindful of “band councils” versus traditional councils, and the consequences of who we get in touch with (band councils are often backed by the government, and aboriginal leadership involves a multitude of levels)...

Kim: We need to be allies with aboriginal communities, and let them know that we are engaged in the same struggles, and we need to avoid tokenising any aboriginal involvement.

Alex: There is a Six Nations solidarity group in Hamilton that he’ll try to get in touch with...

Amanda: We should not allow this group to be co-opted by any left/right politics or religion.



MEETING END: 8:57PM

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, October 13<sup>th</sup> @ 7PM (Sky Dragon Centre)

FURTHER TALKING POINTS (POSSIBLE):

Communication with the Media and Police

Committee organization

Coming up with a leaflet for the Saturday after the  
15<sup>th</sup>